

About Us

Founded in 2007 as a subsidiary of Aqu, Inc., Aqu Sports consists of an executive team and day-to-day staff of seasoned event management and bicycle racing professionals dedicated to producing the 2010 Tour of America. Below are some of the key members of the Tour of America team. Feel free to read their bios and contact them with any questions.

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Frank Arokiasamy - Tour Director Frank Arokiasamy is the Tour Director and architect behind the Tour of America, a multi-stage, coast-to-coast, professional international bicycle road race. Frank's dream for a Tour de France type event in America began in 2000 as Frank watched Lance Armstrong compete for cycling's most prestigious title. Not only was Frank stirred by Lance's athletic performance but also by the way American fans rallied behind the event and the participating athletes. His only disappointment was there was no international road race of that caliber he could attend in the U.S. This experience triggered several months of gathering the marketing, financial and economic research needed to support the idea that America could pull off a race of that caliber and prestige. Warm community, sponsorship and cycling industry responses to budding American races such as the Tour of Georgia, Tour of California and Tour of Missouri only validated Frank's ambitions. Through this process the idea for the Tour of America was born. Using his experience in management, financial and administrative consulting coupled with his drive and motivation, Arokiasamy now heads North-Carolina based sports management company, Aqu, Inc. The company is staffed with 15 full time employees who will help him execute the development and supervision of the Tour of America. Previously, Arokiasamy earned a PhD in economics and finance and an undergraduate degree in marketing, both from Southern Illinois University. Throughout the last decade, Frank has worked as general manager, regional director, vice-president of finance and chief financial officer for the Avanti Group, Custom Rotary Converting and the international InterWorld Group. In these positions, Frank gained experience in all aspects of upper management including managing acquisitions and mergers, human resources, marketing and customer service efforts and analyzing financial data for domestic and international branches of the company.

Frank currently resides in Lumberton, NC.

Contact Frank at franka@aqusports.com

Richard Dunn - Race Director Race Director Richard Dunn's experience in business management, customer service, competitive cycling/coaching and race promotion make him the ideal candidate to run the full time race operations of the Tour of America. Over the years, Richard has honed his cycling skills into becoming a top-rated race promoter. From his early days of coordinating the cycling portions of the 1996 Olympic Torch Relay from Los Angeles to Atlanta to promoting the French Broad Cycling Classic (A three-day USCF sanctioned bike race) or managing the USA Cycling Regional Development Camp, Richard has worked with more than his fair share of law enforcement agencies, venue managements, media, cycling organizations, coaching staffs and riders at the local, state and national level to produce profitable cycling events. As a former member of the USA National Road team and a competitive road cyclist coach, Richard also understands the complexities of mapping an aggressive but manageable race route and the intricacies of working around the international pro racing team schedules. Subsequent to earning a bachelor degree at University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Richard was also involved in the food & beverage industry as a member of hotel and resort management. Throughout his career he managed many upscale restaurants, banquet service and room service programs. Richard currently lives in Asheville, N.C., where he enjoys local arts & entertainment, easy access to great roads to ride and other outdoor adventure sports.

Contact Richard at richardd@aqusports.com

David Mayer-Oakes—Assistant Race Director As Assistant Race Director, David Mayer-Oakes brings an extensive background in communications, technical direction and management experience in sports event promotion and operations. David began his career as an accomplished cyclist, representing the United States in three World Championships, participating in amateur and professional international events and being named the Junior National Road Champion in 1974. Subsequent to his competitive cycling career, David continued to gain experience in sports operations with positions such as stage director, technical director, race command and race announcer for events such as the Coors Classic, Tour of Texas, Tour Dupont and Killington Stage Race, among others. After 15 years of race promotion and operations, David worked as a regional coach for USA Cycling. In addition to creating and managing a Regional Development Camp for junior road athletes, David was manager for the U.S. National Team at the Tour of China, Bergamasca in Italy, Gran Prix St. Josef and the World Junior Championships in Ecuador. Most recently, David worked as a National Athlete Development Manager for USA Cycling. While in this position, David created and managed regional Development Camps for junior road and mountain bike athletes and managed marketing and all contractors for Development Programs nationwide. David currently lives in Lubbock, Texas.

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Maria Elena Olivarez - General Manager As general manager for Aqu, Inc, Maria Olivarez is primarily responsible for all budgets and accounting for the Tour of America, hiring within the organization and managing internal teams including volunteers, sponsorships and team relations. As an experienced office and property manager, Maria also provides administrative support by conducting research, preparing reports and handling general information requests pertaining to the Tour of America. Maria graduated from the University of North Carolina with a bachelor degree in Business Administration. She is also a veteran of the US Army and a member of the North Carolina Society of Hispanic Professionals. Maria currently lives in Lumberton, NC.

Contact Maria at mario@aqusports.com

Rick Warren - Volunteer Director As volunteer director, Rick Warren is working with community organizers across the country to recruit the thousands of volunteers needed to help before, during and after the Tour of America. Previously, Rick has held positions in the theatre, radio, television, film and music industries and coordinated volunteer and event efforts for the San Francisco Jazz Festival, the San Francisco International Film Festival and local PBS affiliate, KQED-TV. Rick is actively involved in bicycle touring and is a training ride leader. In 2008 he participated in his fourth consecutive AIDS/LifeCycles bike race, a fundraising event from San Francisco to Los Angeles. He also volunteers for Project Homeless Connect, a nonprofit organization that finds lasting solutions for the homeless population in San Francisco. Rick was born and raised in Northern California and has lived in San Francisco, CA since 1989.

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Auburn Collins —Director of Merchandising With more than 25 years of sales and management experience, Auburn Collins joins the Tour of America team as Director of Merchandising. Most recently, Auburn worked in insurance sales and in 2003 was named Agent of the Year for Blue Cross Blue Shield's largest independent agency. Prior to that, Auburn worked to open new markets and establish a sales representative program for German plastics company, Rehau, Inc. In the late 1980's, Auburn worked as vice president of sales for the largest captive HVAC rep group on the east coast, BRS Sales and Marketing. Prior to those positions, Auburn also worked for Nationwide Insurance Company and the Dallas Convention Center. Auburn received a bachelors of Science degree in Recreation Management and Business Administration from Appalachian State University and has since graduated from sales programs such as the American Institute of Sales and the Professional Selling Skills Program at Xerox Document University. He and his fiancée, Bobbie, live in North Carolina where they love to travel and walk their dog, Stoney.

Contact Auburn at auburnc@aqusports.com

Rachel Enter-Guzman —Fiesta Director As Fiesta Director, Rachel Enter-Guzman oversees planning details for the fiestas taking place during the Tour of America. Her background in project management, communications and marketing come into play as she coordinates event details with exhibitors, sponsors, vendors and local entertainers. Rachel currently owns and manages Toro Construction, a construction management company that focuses on multiple

use and single family construction projects. Prior to that, Rachel worked as a project specialist, administrative assistant and communication coordinator for companies such as Philips Oral Healthcare, Access Staffing and Korman Marketing Group, respectively. First as a student intern and now as an alumni board member, Rachel actively participates in Up with People International, a non-profit organization dedicated to providing students with global perspective, intercultural understanding, leadership skills and a commitment to community service through international experiences. Rachel received a Master's in marketing from University of Phoenix and an undergraduate degree in Communications from George Mason University. She and her husband, Paul, live in Seattle, Wash., where they enjoy downhill skiing and taking walks with their newborn daughter.

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Karen D. O'Neill - Logistics Director With more than 10 years experience in government, media and donor relationship management, program development and event management, Karen O'Neill is responsible for race entourage travel and logistics, which includes lodging, meals and transportation as the race moves from city to city. Most recently, Karen spent three years as part of the foundation that created the Tour de Georgia, a professional multi-stage bicycle race. Her experiences with the foundation included sponsorship development and maintenance, entourage operations and logistics, editorship of the 64-page event souvenir magazine and managing all special events. Additionally, Karen has served as a volunteer for the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, an education docent at the Atlanta History Center and an advance and logistics director for a Holocaust education project in Poland. She has tutored at-risk elementary students in social studies and language arts. Currently, she is on the communications committee for her church. Karen received her Master's of Public Administration from the University of Georgia School of Public and International Affairs and her undergraduate degree in journalism from Georgia State University. She and her husband have one daughter and live in north Georgia.

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Ed Bazel - Entertainment Director
CEO, The Bazel Group, Inc.

Ed Bazel is a seasoned veteran of producing corporate events for leading Fortune 500 companies around the world. With over 30 years of industry experience, he has worked with a virtual who's who list of concert artists, comedians and speakers in a wide variety of exotic settings. Having worked in over 25 different countries, Bazel was named "The Marco Polo of Modern Music" by the Los Angeles Times for his groundbreaking work in China. Ed Bazel currently holds the position of CEO (Chief Entertainment Organizer) for The Bazel Group, Inc.

Professional affiliations include membership in the CMA and the ACM. He serves on the Nashville Chamber of Commerce Music Industry Task Force, is the immediate past President and board member of NATD - Nashville Association of Talent Directors, as well as immediate past President and officer of ieba. Bazel holds a Bachelor's of Business Administration degree from Marshall University and a post graduate degree in Computer Sciences from the University of Kentucky.